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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 06 TEL AVIV 004791

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TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1.](#) Gaza Disengagement
- [2.](#) Iran: Nuclear Program
- [3.](#) Global Struggle Against Violent Extremism

Key stories in the media:

All media reported that tens of thousands of right-wing activists participated in Tuesday's anti-disengagement rally in Sderot, after which they left the town and traveled south to Ofakim to continue their protests today. The media say that a few hundred extremists could try to infiltrate Gush Katif. Leading media (banner in Maariv) write that a rally to be held next to Jerusalem's Western (Wailing) Wall on Tish'a B'av -- August 14 -- the day commemorating the destruction of the two Temples, could turn into a serious disturbance.

Ha'aretz (Zeev Schiff) quoted U.S. security envoy Lt. Gen. William Ward as saying that the PA's expected dispatching of forces to maintain order is only one of the steps the Palestinians are taking ahead of the disengagement. Ward was quoted as saying that there is full military coordination between IDF officers and senior PA officials, and that the operation will succeed if everything works as planned. Ha'aretz reported that IDF representatives met with PA security chiefs on Tuesday to coordinate the disengagement for the first time after a month-long hiatus. Israel Radio reported that PM Sharon will meet with Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz and other officials today to discuss the issue of land borders with Egypt. The radio says that the defense establishment favors a border crossing at Kerem Shalom, south of Rafah, and that Vice Premier Shimon Peres proposes that passage for persons be in Rafah, and for goods in Nitzana. Maariv reported that the IDF proposes that Israel cancel its control over passage of persons and goods at the Rafah terminal, but that Israel would announce ahead of time that its reaction will be "unprecedented" in its vigor if the Palestinians abuse the arrangement by smuggling weapons and launching rockets into Israel. Israel Radio reported that Mofaz will visit Jordan today to discuss the implementation of the disengagement and bilateral security cooperation issues with King Abdullah and senior Jordanian officials. The station also reported that PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas will meet with King Abdullah of Jordan today.

Jerusalem Post and Israel Radio reported that Peres will meet with Quartet envoy James Wolfensohn today. Jerusalem Post says that the two men will discuss some of the key outstanding issues that need to be resolved prior to disengagement -- the link between Gaza and the West Bank; air and sea ports in Gaza; the border transfer points and customs envelope; removal of roadblocks and improved movement within the West Bank; the future of the homes in the settlements; the Gaza greenhouses; and a U.S. agreement on a USD-2.2 billion aid package to Israel. Israel Radio reported that the PA will create a company that will manage the assets left by Israel after the disengagement, and handle the affairs of foreign workers in the Strip.

Ha'aretz quoted officials responsible for the construction of the separation fence in the "Jerusalem envelope" as saying that construction of the fence will not be completed before the end of the year.

An Islamic Jihad leader in the West Bank, Abdel Halim

Izzedine, known as Abu Qassam, was quoted as saying in an interview with Ha'aretz that his organization supports the hudna (cease-fire) but is forced to respond to Israeli provocations. Izzedine said his organization might recognize Israel.

Maariv reported that a flyer and a video recording claiming that Al-Qaida has opened a branch in the Gaza Strip were distributed among Islamic extremists in the Strip on Tuesday. The newspaper writes that Palestinian sources have expressed their doubts regarding the report's veracity.

Leading media reported that a Palestinian attempt to target the demonstrators failed Tuesday when a Qassam rocket fired at Sderot landed by mistake in the Palestinian town of Beit Hanun, killing a three-year-old Palestinian boy and wounding nine other Palestinians. Ha'aretz reported that, minutes before the rockets were launched, Palestinians fired an anti-tank rocket at an Israeli convoy traveling to the isolated settlement of Netzarim, causing no injuries. Islamic Jihad and the PFLP claimed responsibility for the attack on the convoy. Jerusalem Post quoted a senior officer in the IDF's Southern Command as saying that the IDF asked the PA, during disengagement coordination talks on Monday, to curb terrorist organizations and prevent them from firing Qassam rockets at Sderot on Sunday. This morning, Israel Radio reported that the military branch of Islamic Jihad told AFP that the organization instructed its militants three days ago to stop firing rockets at Israeli targets until after the disengagement. Israel Radio reported that a Palestinian was killed in a blast in the southern Gaza Strip before dawn on Tuesday. The radio quoted Palestinians as saying that the man was mishandling explosives.

Maariv reported that Israel is seeking to remove UNIFIL from Lebanon and to force the Lebanese government to deploy its forces in the south of the country. The newspaper also cited a report published by a Lebanese news agency, according to which the U.S. intends to press Israel to withdraw from the Sheba Farms area. Maariv says that American sources have denied the report.

Leading media cited a U.S. intelligence report made public by Washington Post on Tuesday, according to which Iran may be up to 10 years away from making a nuclear bomb, double the previous assessment. Ha'aretz writes that the report disproves the original U.S. estimate.

Yediot reported that disengagement opponents paralyzed the activity of the Israeli Consulate-General in New York City on Tuesday by placing two fictitious announcements on New York Internet sites.

Ha'aretz reported that Qatar will donate at least USD 10 million to the municipality of the Israeli-Arab city of Sakhnin in order to "help put the Galilee city firmly on the sports map in the Middle East." Sakhnin, which has 25,000 residents, is a success story of Israeli-Arab soccer.

1. Gaza Disengagement:

Summary:

Conservative columnist Yosef Harif wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "Sharon should not be frightened by external pressure and give up his strategic 'credo' -- even if he is compelled to enter a confrontation with his great friend in the White House."

Block Quotes:

"After the Disengagement Comes Annexation"

Conservative columnist Yosef Harif wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (August 3): "Sharon keeps repeating these days that Israel adheres to the 'road map'.... How does the [map's] demand that Israel 'end the occupation' reconcile with annexing territories and Israel maintaining large settlement blocks in Judea and Samaria [i.e. the West Bank], about which Sharon claims he received a promise from President Bush.... It is commonly assumed that Sharon aspires to enter history as the person who reached peace and security. But out-and-out concessions and surrender to external dictates won't lead him there. Sharon had a strategic plan that

talked about the necessity of keeping security areas in Judea and Samaria, which ought to be annexed to Israel. Sharon should not be frightened by external pressure and give up his strategic 'credo' -- even if he is compelled to enter a confrontation with his great friend in the White House.... [Following crises during the Nixon and Reagan presidencies] and upon other occasions, ways were eventually found to achieve an understanding between Washington and Jerusalem. Those developments should inspire Israel 'on the day after' [disengagement]. This will be Sharon's greatest test."

12. Iran: Nuclear Program:

Summary:

Washington correspondent Orly Azolai wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "President Bush isn't the first leader in history who has tried to preserve his political power by intimidating citizens, but he has turned this approach into an art."

Block Quotes:

"Bush's Knack"

Washington correspondent Orly Azolai wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (August 3): "The day President Bush defined Iran as a leading 'axis of evil' country, he started putting together a series of allegations in order to justify a future military operation against it. On Tuesday, it turned out that his claims ... don't hold water. U.S. intelligence found that Iran doesn't represent a threat against world peace in the immediate term, but Bush doesn't like being confused with facts.... Since Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected Iran's president, the American 'spin' has turned into real brainwashing. According to the White House, Satan resides in Tehran. In two years, the ayatollahs would be a pushbutton away from annihilating the world. Vice President Cheney has already declared that if the crisis wasn't solved through diplomatic ways, America had offensive military options. But all the American intelligence branches have just spat in the President's face.... President Bush isn't the first leader in history who has tried to preserve his political power by intimidating citizens, but he has turned this approach into an art: in Iraq and Afghanistan first, and now in Iran.... For their part, the Iranians continue their policy of ambiguity. They know the truth, but they don't care whether the world fears them and continues to woo them. Nuclear blackmail pays -- just ask North Korea."

13. Global Struggle Against Violent Extremism:

Summary:

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "If the growing determination Blair has shown were mirrored in the statements and actions of the entire international community, the battle against terror would, indeed, be well on the way to victory."

Block Quotes:

"Tony Blair Gets It"

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (August 3): "I was in London last week for meetings with Prime Minister Tony Blair and Foreign Secretary Jack Straw.... For many years, many saw

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suicide terror as Israel's problem alone. The world preferred to view it as a localized problem despite the Israeli people's understanding that if Palestinian grievances supposedly justified such terror, it would only be a matter of time before some other grievance was used to justify suicide terrorism elsewhere. The impulse to remove from the equation the free choice of terrorists to explode themselves, along with as many innocent victims as possible, is one of the most dangerous trends in the public response to global terror. In my meetings with Blair and Straw I was impressed by the determination of the British government to stand up to this drivel.... Tony Blair's

unequivocal recent statements on terror should be compulsory reading for all leaders, journalists and anyone who shares our determination to stop the terrorists from taking away our democratic way of life and its hard-won freedoms. They should be applied not only in the British context, but everywhere terrorists lurk. Britain, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union, has taken some welcome steps along this path. We hope that this trend will continue and solidify. If the growing determination Blair has shown were mirrored in the statements and actions of the entire international community, the battle against terror would, indeed, be well on the way to victory."

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